



July

National Ice Cream Month

National Grilling Month

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

UV Safety Month

7/4 Independence Day

7/23 National Parent's Day

7/30 Paperback Book Day

July Birthdays

7/2 Nancy Holder

7/3 Michelle Clark

7/4 Kesha Wilson

7/10 Shelby Maldonado

7/11 Annemarie Barnes

7/11 Shelly Barnes

7/14 Portland Gilbert

7/16 Yvette Swift

7/17 Gail Johnson

7/19 LaToyia Sewell

7/20 Carolyn Ford

7/23 Rhee Reamy

7/24 Mary Jo Vallie

7/25 Nancy Weaver

7/28 Marcia Huber

Independence Day, the Fourth of July

Independence Day is annually celebrated on July 4 and is often known as "the Fourth of July". It is the anniversary of the publication of the declaration of independence from Great Britain in 1776. Patriotic displays and family events are organized throughout the United States.

Fostering Independence is the DHS theme for July. In keeping with the fostering independence theme, DDS will celebrate the service of the AmeriCorps members who have worked with residents and staff at the HDCs to start community gardens on July 6th at the Arkadelphia HDC. The volunteer service hours (averaging 500 hours each) to create these gardens have not only laid the foundation but provided on-going opportunities for learning and growth.

Meet Deborah Renfroe, DDS Specialist II



Pictured: Daughter Cara, Gaven on top of Garrett's shoulders, and Debbie on the left. Taken at grandson's graduation.

Hello out there! Yvette asked me to write some words of waiver wisdom and bits and pieces about myself since I'm going to be retiring sometime in the future after I get all this Social Security and Medicare business figured out. I'm hitting the big "65" this year. What a surprise to find out that it's pretty darn confusing! So I'm taking it one step at a time and starting out with just getting regular Medicare.

I started in waiver services back at the end of 1989 or early 1990 for a provider that was in one of the 10 pilot counties in Arkansas when waiver first came into existence. What a difference it made in the lives of those that wanted something more than to live in a group home or an HDC because those were the only options. One lady in particular had lived in an HDC for a long time and came to live in the women's home. Well, that just didn't sit well with her. She wouldn't sit still at the day program, and she walked away from the group home. We set her up in a home before waiver even got started. Things were slightly better there but she still walked away. We were constantly following her or looking for her when she got out of sight. After several moves and constantly changing staff, she moved into a little house that one of her most favorite staff had lived in. Finally, she stayed at her house. She loved living in "Bonnie's" house. She finally felt like she was home. After many trials and adjustments, I had found the right situation for my lady. (cont. pg 2)

Renfroe Cont.

She still had her particular issues, but at last she felt at home. That's what waiver is all about. Finding what works for those persons that we serve.

I came to DDS after 9 years as a Waiver Coordinator which was the original title for what is now the Direct Care Supervisor. DDS was hiring new specialists all over the state because they were about to release quite a few names from the waiver request list. So I had some 9 counties and I was running around getting waiver applications completed. This was when all you had to do to sign up for waiver was to complete the ACS 102. When a person was released, we went to see them and got social history information, psychological testing updated (at least then the mental health agencies could do psychological testing and bill Medicaid), areas of need, and choice paperwork. For Medicaid if they already had SSI we only had to get the 727 and 662 completed, and only the full Medicaid application if they were not on SSI. Wow, did that make things easy or what! The thing I really procrastinated about was the writing of the social history. We didn't get to just fill out the social history form, we got all the information we needed from the person/family/guardian and wrote it up in narrative format. Then we sent the entire packet to the program manager and the application went up the chain from there until it was approved or denied. I hear specialists every day say they hate having to do these conversions and you know what I tell them? I love them they are a breeze! They are what I started out doing when I first came to waiver and it's the easiest thing to do now that we don't have to type up that social history narrative! Bring those new people on! That is the best part or at least my favorite part of this job. Calling someone up and telling them they have been released from the application list and they are going to get waiver services now. So from there, we went to reviewing plans. First it was only plans that were \$32,500 and under which we could sign off on ourselves. Then the ones that were \$32,501 and up to max extensive \$160/day 365 days we reviewed and then sent to the manager to second signature and then came the Pervasive plans. Let's not forget that there have been 2 waiver renewals during my time and then this 3rd renewal we are still in the middle of finalizing. This renewal is really going to change the face of waiver. I'm not sure I will still be here when this renewal finally gets completed.

I believe I am now the last remaining specialist that was hired in 1998. Other than Phyllis Lenz who was with DDS before I was hired, but then she retired for a while and came back. I used to talk to Phyllis at meetings and trainings that DDS waiver staff held for providers back in the day. She was a wealth of information about services. Bonnie Dickelman was right there along with her after she came aboard. Bonnie was the person that told me about DDS putting a waiver specialist position in Boone County and told me to apply for it. I did and here I am 19 years later.

You know I've said this a multitude of times to a number of people, but what our waiver division needs is a set training program for new specialists. I've had to train a number of people over the years and it's very difficult to teach people all the ins and outs

particularly in reviewing plans. Some of the things we do in reviewing a plan are just not written down anywhere. As our jobs have changed over the years and duties have been added, I found that it gets harder and harder to "download" all that information that we've picked up and learned over the years to someone new. So that's my wish for the future, that a training program gets started and that it grows and changes with all the upcoming and future changes of the job we perform.

To wrap all this up, a little bit about me. I have 2 grown daughters and 3 grandsons. My oldest daughter is in Branson and my younger daughter lives in Fayetteville. My grandsons are all around the Harrison area. I have 2 cats that I claim are mine, Ozzie and BMO, and 3 extras outside that the neighbor moved out and abandoned. I found a home for one of them so I'm down to 2. (Anyone that would like one of them, Sunshine and Bob, let me know.) My youngest grandson still likes to come to grandma's house and hang out with me every couple of weeks. We enjoy going to see movies we both like. We just saw Guardians of the Galaxy Volume 2. Loved it! We stayed until all the credits had rolled so we could see the "extras" in their midst. Outside of work, I've been planting perennials around the yard. Some come back next year, and some don't. Can't figure out what's up with that, but I keep trying. I like to read a lot of books. Some favorite authors are Janet Evanovich and John Sandford with some C.J. Box and David Baldacci thrown in and a whole lot of other authors. I keep picking out books that I've already read so I had to start a list to keep from doing that. I take a book with me everywhere that I go. I enjoy a range of TV shows from The Walking Dead to Shameless and Game of Thrones all way to the other end of the spectrum which would be This is Us. What I'd like to do in the future is see one of the oceans. I've never been to the ocean. I would like to go to Washington D.C. and especially go to the Smithsonian and the National Zoo. I might be able to combine the ocean with the D.C. trip.

That's me in a nutshell. Hope I haven't bored anyone. I'm looking forward to retiring even though people tell me I might not like it after it happens. I'm ready to not get up at a set time and get ready and get out the door. It's time to slow down and enjoy the next chapter which is life after working every day for some 49/50 odd years. I'll find something to do once I take that last step and head out of my office door for the very last time! I'll be right here in front of this computer until that last day.

DDS Staff Mid-Year Resolution Check-In



- ◆ Work on my credit/buying a house
- ◆ Walk in my calling/closer walk with God
- ◆ Complete my master's degree
- ◆ Complete my bachelor's degree
- ◆ Meet my size 10 goal
- ◆ Eat healthier
- ◆ Try and stay positive at all times
- ◆ Cook more
- ◆ Save more money
- ◆ Work on my attitude
- ◆ Learn how to budget
- ◆ Be a better listener
- ◆ Work on my finances
- ◆ Be physically and mentally awake
- ◆ Make better health choices
- ◆ Enjoy every moment
- ◆ Enjoy what you have
- ◆ Be healthy, keep it simple
- ◆ Survive this coming year literally & figuratively
- ◆ I don't want to acquire more things. I only want to acquire memories.
- ◆ Put an end date in 2017 to unfinished goals from 2016

What progress have you made? What can you cross off your list? What did you conveniently ignore or run from? We have 6 months left in 2017. What will you do with them? The opposite of failure is not success. The opposite of failure is never giving up. Take inventory of where you are, make the necessary readjustments, and go for it!

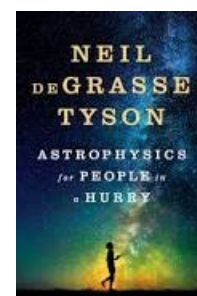
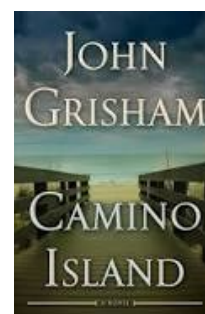
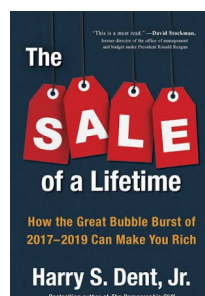
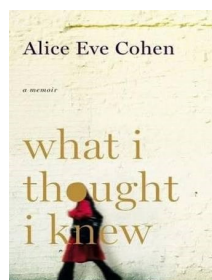
Director Stone's Mid-Year Note

DDS, through our strategic planning teams, continues to meet the goals established for 2017. Go Team Go!!!! Beginning this month, we will implement our first step towards transforming the DDS Medicaid programs. In the fall of 2016, DDS proposed changes in the Medicaid Provider Manuals and Medicaid State Plan for Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy, for clients with developmental disabilities or delays. The changes established the amount of therapy services that can be billed per week without an extension of benefits/prior authorization. Currently, therapy providers can bill up to four (4) units, or 60 minutes of each discipline per day and there is no prior authorization for these services. Beginning on July 1, 2017, therapists will not be able to bill more than 90 minutes (6 units) per week of therapy in each discipline without an extension of benefits/prior authorization. The changes to the weekly therapy amounts go into effect on July 1, 2017. We will discuss this change in our upcoming DDS Annual Training on August 17, 2017, but wanted to make you aware in case you get questions. All questions regarding therapy at this point can be directed to Shelby Maldonado, our DDS policy coordinator. Shelby's number is 501.682.8701 or by email at Shelby.maldonado@dhs.arkansas.gov.



Reader's Nook

National Paperback Book Day, July 30th



Save The Dates

2017 Arkansas Sales Tax Holiday

Saturday, August 5th at 12:01a.m. through
Sunday, August 6th at 11:59p.m.

DDS Annual Training

Thursday, August 17, 2017

***mandatory for all staff excluding HDCs**

2nd Annual DDS Fall Food & Craft Fair
October 13, 2017

2nd Annual DHS Halloween Children's Event
Tuesday, October 31, 2017



Comments, Suggestions, Q&A

Let us know what you'd like to see featured in upcoming editions. If you'd like to be a guest writer, let us know! Send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov